

AB 950 – Streamlining the Teacher Fingerprinting/Credentialing System

Assemblymember Fran Pavley

IN BRIEF

Requires county offices of education to be responsible for teacher fingerprinting – this will reduce the number of times teachers need to be fingerprinted and save them money. Some counties such as Kings, Glen, and San Luis Obispo already do this.

THE ISSUE

Under the current credentialing system, teachers are fingerprinted at least three times: 1. At their teacher prep institution (ex. CSU) to begin student teaching. 2. At the county office of education to obtain a temporary teaching certificate. 3. At the school district for employment purposes. At each of these steps teachers have to pay numerous fees.

Here is an excerpt from the Legislative Analyst's recommendation in their April 27, 2006, study entitled, Modernizing the Functions of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC), "...the fingerprinting process for teachers is riddled with redundancies. Many teachers are fingerprinted three times to obtain their first teaching job."

EXISTING LAW

Existing law requires the CTC to obtain criminal record summaries from the Department of Justice prior to issuing credentials or temporary certificates that authorize the applicant to provide instruction in a public school classroom. Existing law also requires local education agencies to obtain criminal history information prior to hiring individuals to work at a school site. Current law requires applicants applying for or renewing a credential to submit legible fingerprints for the purpose of conducting a criminal background check to ascertain the fitness of the individual to serve in a public school.

THE SOLUTION

AB 950 implements one of the LAO's recommendations to streamline the teacher credentialing system.

The bill would put county offices of education in charge of providing fingerprinting services on behalf of school districts within their jurisdiction, and inform those districts of any teacher arrest notifications.

Under this streamlined system, teachers would only have to be fingerprinted once at the county, then if teachers wanted to change schools within a county they would not have to be fingerprinted again.

The Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation would still be involved in the process to ensure security protections.

BACKGROUND

Here is one of the recommendations from the Legislative Analyst's April 27, 2006, study, "Fingerprint Teachers Once at County Level. We recommend the Legislature retain county-level fingerprinting services but eliminate CTC and district's fingerprinting activities. Under the new system, a COE would provide fingerprinting services on behalf of all school districts within that county and inform those districts of any arrest notifications. Although a few county offices already form voluntary consortia with their districts and conduct fingerprinting and related services on their behalf, we recommend legislation be enacted that would extend this streamlined fingerprinting process to all counties. The obvious benefit of such a streamlined system is that teachers would be initially fingerprinted only once and then could move among districts within the county without having to be fingerprinted again. Children, however, would be just as protected in the new system as in the existing system because all teachers still would be fingerprinted and required to receive DOJ clearance."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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